Blindness Control

1295. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has the dubious distinction of having the largest number of blind persons in the world; and

(b) if so, the measures taken to improve serious health problems of people affected by blindness?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) As per WHO estimates, there are 45 million blind persons in the world out of which nearly 7 million blind persons are in India.

(b) Following measures are being taken to prevent and control blindness and restore vision of the affected population:

1. Free Cataract Surgery at Government Hospitals and by Voluntary Organisations.
2. Screening of children with refractive errors and provisions of corrective glasses.
3. Collection and transplantation of donated eyes for treatment of corneal blindness.
4. Public awareness for prevention and treatment of Eye ailments.

Aid given by Gates Foundation

1296. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bill Melinda Gates Foundation has increased its aid to combat HIV/AIDS from $ 100 million to $ 200 million;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the aid given for fighting HIV/AIDS has any conditionalities attached to it; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for accepting foreign aid with the conditionalities attached to it which may militate against our